

## Teaching Philosophy

Since arriving in 1978, I have taught large undergraduate lecture courses (100 to 300 students) at least once per year: Psych 200, Animal Behavior for non-science majors; Psych 300, Animal Behavior for psych majors; and Bio/Psych 409, Sociobiology for bio and psych majors. In the last two years I have concentrated on 200, which I especially enjoy because it is a great vehicle for bringing natural science to non-science majors. This course has become especially challenging since we dropped our discussion sections due to the financial crunch, and I have been striving to find ways to replace the more individual experience that students can get from sections. I have discovered that if I screencast the lectures and provide my full ppt lectures online, then I can open up the lectures into a question and answer format (it helps to have a lecture hall with good ambience and acoustics, like Kane 110). I have developed an informal rule for myself: at least 10 different students have to speak up in the class. With textbook, screencast and complete lecture notes online, I do not worry that I have to 'cover all the material' in class, but can instead make sure through discussion that the students actually get the difficult conceptual material in the class. The one difficulty with animal behavior as an introduction to natural science, and the evolutionary approach in particular, is that students don't come into the course expecting difficult concepts, they coming in expecting lots of good animal stories. The trick is to give them the stories in such a way as to bring the concepts to life.

My experience with smaller and higher-level classes began in serious at the end of my tenure as department chair of Psychology (1993-2002). I and others in the department had felt that the department needed to move beyond its role as a student-credit workhorse for the university, and improve the quality of our upper-division and graduate curriculum. In a complete revamping of our curriculum, we introduced a majors-only set of 300-level core courses designed to feed into a set of 400-level 'keystone' courses; we also increased the number and reduced the size of these 400 level courses; and, finally, we introduced a series of graduate (500 level) core courses. Since that time I have been teaching our new 300-level core course in animal behavior, and have introduced three new courses: 502, Core Concepts in Animal Behavior (offered every other year and taken by graduate students in the animal behavior area and students from other areas and departments), 459, Evolutionary Psychology; and 486, Animal Mind (the latter two taken mostly by senior psych majors). Evolutionary psychology and animal cognition are outside of my research area, but I felt they should be available for psychology majors because they represent the two most obvious applications to traditional areas of psychology of concepts from evolutionary biology and animal behavior.

I developed my philosophy for teaching small courses (20-25 students) when I began teaching in the Honors College after stepping down from the chairship in 2002. Although I no longer teach in the Honors College (financial crunch again), I have carried the philosophy I developed there into my new Psychology 459 and 486 courses: (1) Emphasize discussion and student presentation. When lecture is necessary, make sure it is peppered with questions and discussion. A successful class is one where I can drop out of the discussion entirely for stretches, and the students interact with one another. (2) Original source reading. We either have no textbook or one that is only background reading for general orientation. Students get to pick the readings from original sources (typically journals) within some constraints. (3) Teamwork. All projects (e.g., a PowerPoint presentation of a topic or a journal article) are done in teams of usually 3 students. I feel that learning to work with your colleagues is a crucial skill for undergraduates to acquire, one that they will take into their world after graduation. (4) Experiential learning. For example, in my Honors course, teams do observational studies of animals at the Woodland Park Zoo. I plan to introduce this component into my Animal Mind course with the aid of undergraduate peer TAs (we have no graduate TAs in our 400-level courses). I also plan to introduce a similar people-watching component into my Evolutionary Psychology course this spring. (5) Respect. The students in 459 and 486 are mostly seniors, and I treat them as junior colleagues and expect that they treat their fellow students as colleagues. Thus, for example, when a group of students is presenting on a topic, the remaining students are not to suppose they have the day off, but are expected to ask questions, raise issues and be fully engaged.

Finally, involvement in serious research is one of the real advantages of the UW experience for an undergraduate, and can more than compensate for the large lecture classes they experience in their first few years. Generally I have 3-8 undergrads in my lab in any given quarter, typically taking Psych or Bio 499 research credit, and in recent summers I have been able to get them NSF REU summer support as well. They operate within the extended lab environment, with instruction and supervision from my graduate students as well as from me.

Because of the one-page limit, I have had to leave out my philosophy of graduate teaching. However it is outlined in my brief cv, and also in my Landolt application of last year.